

Subject: The Meaning of Hallelujah

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Date: 9/27/2024, 8:46 AM

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Dear William,

Greetings from Israel The expression of Hallelujah (הללוּיָהּ) is a Hebrew compound word - *hallelu Yah* (הללוּ יְהוָה), which means “Let us praise God.” Hallelujah appears only in the Book of Psalms within the Hebrew Bible and makes its introduction in Psalm 104:35 - “Let sin be finished from the earth, and evil be no more. My soul will bless God, Hallelujah!”

Hallelujah begins and concludes the following psalms: 106, 113, 135, 146-150. The last word of the Book of Psalms is Hallelujah.



Psalm 113 Worship Song

The name of God within Hallelujah is *Yah* (יְהוָה) and it makes its first appearance in Exodus 17:16 - “upon the throne of *Yah* (God), a war against Amalek throughout the generations.” *Yah* is the short form name of God known as the Tetragrammaton (יהוה) - the four-letter name of God, which is usually transliterated as YHWH or YHVH.



Understanding the name of God

Yah occurs at the end of personal names of biblical characters such as Elijah (Eliy-yah), Isaiah (Yesha-yah), Jeremiah (Yirme-yah), Obadiah (Ovad-yah), Zephaniah (Tzefan-yah), and Zechariah (Zekhar-yah). Isaiah uses the lyrics

from the “Song of the Sea” (Exodus 15:2) and modifies it by adding *Yah* to it “... For *Yah* YHVH is my strength and might, and He has been my salvation” (12:2). Isaiah uses *Yah* YHVH again in 26:4, which shows that *Yah* is as acceptable and proper as YHVH.

Hallelujah appears only four times in the New Testament, specifically Chapter 19 in the Book of Revelation. All four come at the climax of the text, when God delivers his people from the destructive power of Babylon. In response to this deliverance the people cry out, “Hallelujah!”

Since The Isaiah Projects is dedicated to Christian families taking deep dives into Scripture, you may want to reflect the Hallelujah expression this weekend and answer the following questions with your family:

- If Hallelujah is about praise, why is its introduction related to the downfall of the wicked?
- What is a possible explanation as to why Scriptures use the short form name of God with Amalek in Exodus 17:16?
- In studying the Psalms, with the Hallelujah as bookends to the chapter, was there anything unique about these psalms than the ones that do not have the Hallelujah either at the beginning or at the end of the Psalms?
- Why do you think Hallelujah is such a powerful expression?

May you and your family have a blessed weekend.

**Shabbat Shalom,
David Nekrutman
Executive Director**



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